

CHAPTER 4 SECTION 1.1

POSITRON EMISSION TOMOGRAPHY (PET)

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I. PROCEDURE CODES

78459, 78491, 78492, 78608, 78609, 78810

II. DESCRIPTION

Positron emission tomography (PET) is a nuclear imaging procedure that uses short-lived radiopharmaceuticals to detect and quantify the metabolic abnormalities of disease processes.

III. POLICY

A. PET scans are covered for the diagnosis and management of seizure disorders.

B. PET scans are covered for evaluation of ischemic heart disease.

C. PET scans are covered for the diagnosis and management of lung cancer.

D. PET scans for other indications are covered when reliable evidence supports that the use of PET is safe, effective, and comparable or superior to standard care (proven).

IV. EXCLUSIONS

PET is considered unproven for the following:

A. The differential diagnosis of symptomatic intracranial masses.

B. The differentiation of low-grade and high-grade brain tumors.

C. The guidance of stereotactic biopsy or biopsies of documented intracranial mass.

D. The differentiation of recurrent brain tumor from radionecrosis.

E. The monitoring of response to treatment in patients with brain tumors.

F. The assessment of cerebrovascular disease, including ischemic disease, hemorrhagic disease, and arteriovenous malformations.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE

A. January 1, 1995, for PET for ischemic heart disease.

B. December 1, 1995, for PET for lung cancer.

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